

HUMAN RESOURCES BULLETIN 98-08

Annual Leave Carryover

The 1998 leave year ends on 2 January 1999. This is a good time for employees and supervisors to review "use or lose" leave and ensure that all leave subject to forfeiture at the end of the leave year is scheduled for use.

Public Law 93-181 provides three conditions under which the maximum amount of leave carryover may be waived. The conditions are:

- a. Loss of leave through administrative error: If an administrative error resulted in forfeiture of annual leave, the leave can be restored.
- b. Exigencies of public business: If a situation arose that precluded the use of scheduled annual leave and there was no reasonable alternative to the cancellation of scheduled leave, the leave can be restored. A specific beginning and ending date of the exigency must be fixed. The situation must be documented and personally approved by the local commander. Requests must be submitted at the time of the exigency. **DO NOT** wait until the end of the leave year.
- c. Sickness: If illness or injury precluded the use of scheduled annual leave and it occurred so late in the leave year that the annual leave could not be rescheduled, the leave may be restored.

Any employee affected by an exigency or illness must request that his/her leave be restored. The request must be submitted in writing through supervisory channels. The leave must have been scheduled at least three pay periods before the end of the leave year. The supervisor will provide supporting documents for the request including: (1) the supervisor's written certification showing the date the leave was scheduled for use, the date the leave was approved, the date the leave was canceled and why it was not rescheduled for use; and (2) a copy of the commander's approval of the exigency. Local procedures govern the processing of such requests; however, the leave must have been scheduled and canceled as indicated, and the exigency approved by the commander.

Annual leave restored under these conditions will be in a special annual leave account. Such restored special leave must be used no later than the end of the leave year ending two years after the termination of the exigency or after the sick employee returns to work. When restoration of leave is approved, the supervisor will be advised of the procedures for recording and using the restored leave.

Donating to a Voluntary Leave Bank: If your organization operates a Voluntary Leave Bank and you do not plan to use all of your use or lose leave for the 1998 leave year, you may donate the use or lose leave which you will forfeit to the Leave Bank. There are limitations on the amount of leave that may be contributed, however. If you are projected to have excess use or lose leave, the maximum amount of annual leave you may contribute during the leave year is the lesser of:

- a. One-half of the amount of annual leave you accrue during the leave year, or
- b. The number of hours remaining in the leave year (as of the date of the contribution) which you are scheduled to work. For example, if you plan to contribute 32 hours of annual leave which you would otherwise forfeit, you must contribute it while you still have 32 hours yet to work in the leave year. The leave year ends on Saturday, January 2, 1999. If your schedule is Monday through Friday, you would be required to contribute your 32 hours of annual leave no later than Thursday, 24 December 1998. (After this date, four workdays remain in the leave year.)

Are You Eligible for Veterans' Preference and Not Even Know It?

The Defense Authorization Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-85) extended veterans' preference eligibility to two new groups: 1) all Gulf War veterans; and 2) recipients of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for service in Operation Joint Endeavor or Operation Joint Guard in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and other areas in that region. Following are the specific eligibility requirements:

Gulf War Veterans. Individuals who served on active military duty in any location during the period 2 August 1990 to 2 January 1992 are entitled to veterans' preference. Requirements are release from the service under honorable conditions, and (1) served a minimum of two years on active duty or (2) if in the reserves, served the full period for which called to active duty.

Service in Bosnia. The law authorizes the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for active military service performed in Bosnia, Herzegovina and other areas in that region under Operation Joint Endeavor. The covered period is from 29 November 1995 to 20 December 1996. You can also receive credit if you served under Operation Joint Guard during the period 20 December 1996 to a date yet to be determined.

If you fall in these categories or need additional information, please contact the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) or Human Resources Office.

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Benefit Initiatives:

A new Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) booklet, *The FEGLI Booklet*, has been released. This is geared toward new employees and includes information on eligibility qualifications, descriptions of benefit levels and various coverage options available. A second publication, *FEGLI: A Handbook for Employees, Annuitants, Compensationers and Employing Offices*, is also available. Both publications are available on OPM's life insurance web page at <http://www.opm.gov/insure/life>. This page provides 24 hours-a-day information to anyone interested in dozens of insurance-related topics, including cost of insurance, conversion rights, open enrollment periods and living benefits.

OPM has a new website dedicated to retirement issues and concerns. The website provides 24 hour-a-day information on a wide variety of issues. A calendar of events and fact sheets such as the address and phone numbers for state tax offices are provided. This site is located at <http://www.opm.gov/retire>.

OPM has fixed the computer program used to compare benefits under the two retirement systems that was causing results to be skewed. Some employees who used the OPM computer model before 16 July 98 to assess whether to switch from the CSRS to FERS, may want to redo part of their comparisons. The FERS transfer model, before it was corrected, was not allowing employees to plug in Thrift Savings Plan investments exceeding \$10,000 per year, since that is the current IRS limit. But the limit applies only to an employee's contributions. When government contributions are added in, the total can exceed \$10,000 per year. The program has now been corrected to allow for the higher amount. The OPM model is available from the OPM website at http://www.opm.gov/fers_election.

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